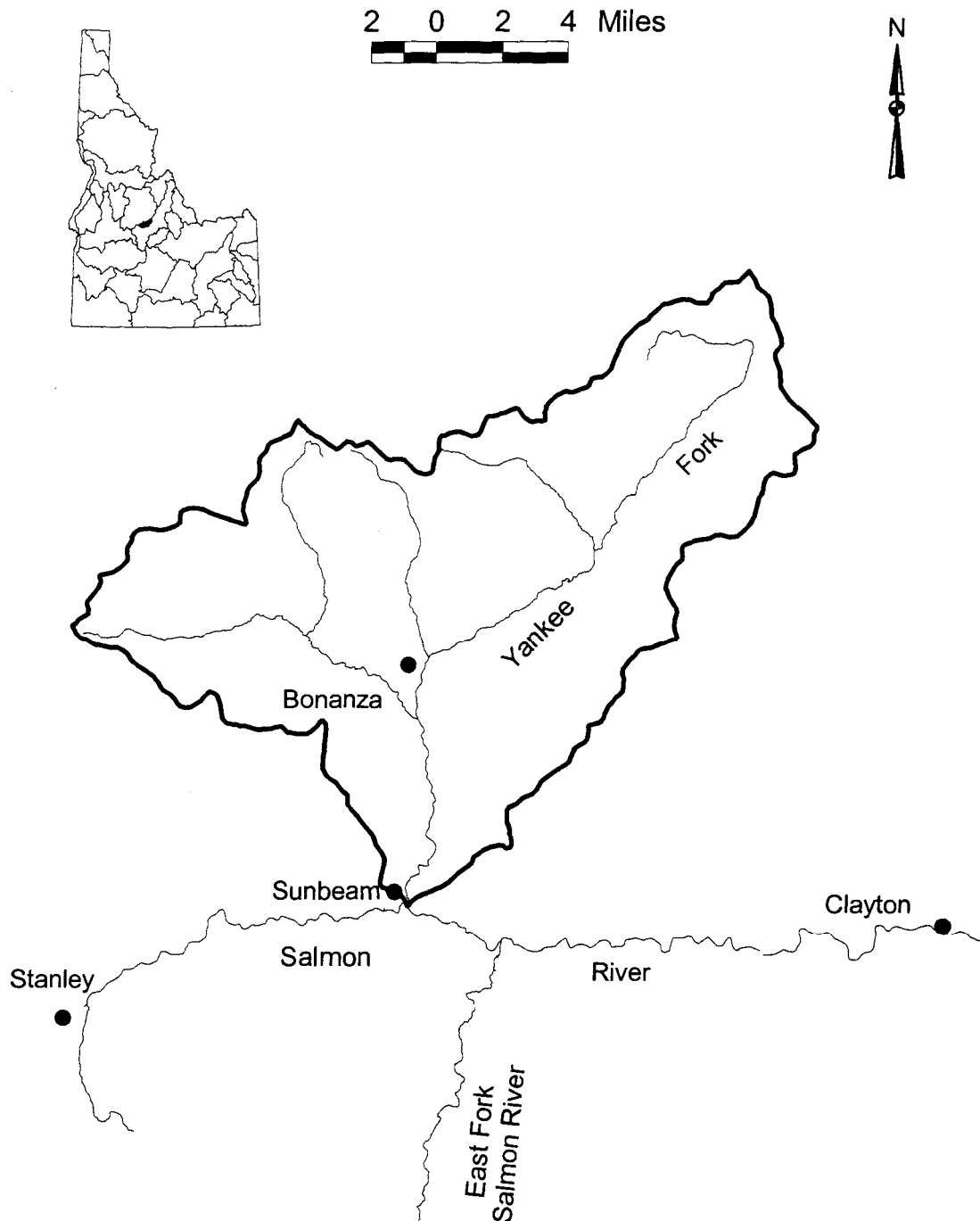


# Salmon River Drainage

## Yankee Fork



## 16. YANKEE FORK SALMON RIVER DRAINAGE

### A. Overview

The Yankee Fork Salmon River flows 26 miles from its headwaters to the Salmon River at river mile 367.1. The drainage area is 195 square miles. Soils are primarily Idaho Batholith granitics, which produce infertile streams.

Gold was discovered in the drainage in 1873 and the towns of Custer and Bonanza developed into thriving mining communities along the banks of the Yankee Fork. Until the late 1930s, gold was extracted by placer mining. In 1938 a large dredge was constructed and operated from 1939-1942 by the Silas Mason Company. After World War II the dredge was reactivated and operated until 1952. It was estimated that \$11 million worth of gold was extracted (at market values effective at the time of mining) from approximately eight miles of Yankee Fork and Jordan Creek. Mining activity continues today throughout the drainage and particularly in the Jordan Creek drainage. Hecla Mining Company has had a continuing problem with subsurface discharge of chemicals into Jordan Creek.

Secondary roads border the entire length of Jordan Creek and the Yankee Fork upstream to McKay Creek. The lower West Fork is accessible by road and the remainder of the stream is bordered by a trail.

Despite the extensive mining, Yankee Fork continues to support very small runs of chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Hatchery steelhead have also been outplanted into this drainage and will be used for natural production augmentation. A chinook captive rearing program was initiated in the West Fork Yankee Fork as a short-term approach to species preservation. Resident species include rainbow trout, bull trout and cutthroat trout. Several dredge ponds are stocked with catchable rainbow trout during the summer months.

### B. Objectives and Programs

1. Objective: Preservation of chinook and steelhead by harvest closures.

Program: Coordinate efforts with Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to protect existing chinook salmon spawners.

2. Objective: Maintain and improve fish habitat and water quality.

Program: Continue to actively pursue funding with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, U. S. Forest Service, J.R. Simplot Co., and others, to reestablish the dredged portion of the Yankee Fork mainstem to a natural state.

Program: Reduce impacts of mining activity to fish populations and habitat by continuing to work with agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Water Resources, mining companies, and private consultants to provide adequate protective measures in licensing and permitting agreements.

3. Objective: Improve resident fishery in the Yankee Fork system.

Program: Maintain harvest closures on cutthroat trout in the mainstem Yankee Fork.

DRAINAGE: Yankee Fork Salmon River					
Water	Miles/acres	Fishery			Management direction
		Type	Species present	Management	
Mainstem and West Fork	30/	Coldwater Anadromous	Rainbow trout Whitefish	Wild	Provide fishery supported by natural production.
			Chinook salmon Steelhead Bull trout Cutthroat trout	Conservation	Closed to adult harvest. Supplement with hatchery releases. Develop harvest strategies. Closed to harvest.
Tributaries excluding West Fork	70/	Coldwater Anadromous	Rainbow trout Whitefish Cutthroat trout	Wild	Provide fishery supported by natural production
			Steelhead Chinook salmon  Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to adult harvest. Supplement with hatchery releases. Develop harvest strategies.  Closed to harvest.
Yankee Fork Dredge Ponds	/10	Coldwater Anadromous	Rainbow trout	Put-and-take trout	Provide put-and-take fishery. Increase stocking to provide additional harvest opportunity.